

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the paragraph on page 4, lines 8-30, as shown:

Accordingly, the invention provides a tapping unit including:

a casing adapted to be fixed facing a part to be machined on a support of a machine tool such as a press and having an interior housing,

a pattern, including a bush with a tapped bore, inserted axially in the interior housing of the casing and prevented from rotating by immobilizing means,

a tap-carrier, including means for receiving and retaining a tap, having a threaded section functionally engaged in the tapped bore of the pattern, and having a drive section,

a drive shaft, rotatably mounted in the casing, having a bore receiving the drive section of the tap-carrier, which is adapted to slide longitudinally in it, and driven in rotation by a mechanical transmission driven by a motor,

means for allowing slight and limited radial movement of the tap in the casing about a mean radial position,

means for allowing limited ~~forward~~ axial forward movement of the tap toward the exterior of the casing from a reference position and against the action of advance return spring means.

Please amend the paragraph on page 4, line 31, through page 5, line 11, as follows:

In a practical embodiment, the means for allowing limited axial ~~advance~~ forward movement of the tap include:

an axial bore in the casing in which the pattern can slide longitudinally between the reference position and a retracted proximal position,

a posterior distal shoulder in said axial bore in the casing,

an anterior distal shoulder on the pattern, facing the posterior distal shoulder in the bore, with an appropriate axial distance between said shoulders when the pattern is in a reference position,

an advance return spring means comprising an advance ~~compression~~ return spring inserted in the axial bore in the casing between the anterior distal shoulder of the pattern and the posterior distal shoulder of the bore in order to push the pattern axially back in the retraction direction.

Please amend the paragraph on page 5, lines 12-14 as follows:

The unit preferably further includes return radial spring means for returning the tap-carrier to a centered radial position in the casing.

Please amend the paragraph on page 5, line 30 through page 6, line 1, as follows:

To increase further the capacity to absorb unwanted movements of the part to be machined, the tapping unit according to the invention preferably further includes means for allowing limited axial retrograde movement of the tap toward the interior of the casing from the reference position, and a retraction against the action of return spring ~~means~~ which pushes the pattern axially in the forward direction.

Please amend the paragraph on page 6, lines 2-15, as follows:

In a practical embodiment, the means for allowing limited axial retrograde movement of the tap include:

a proximal posterior shoulder on said axial bore in the casing,

a corresponding proximal posterior shoulder on the pattern,

[[a]] said retraction return spring, inserted in the interior housing of the casing between the proximal posterior shoulder of the pattern and a front bearing surface of the casing, in order to ~~retract~~ push the pattern axially in the forward direction, the thrust of the retraction return spring being inhibited by the proximal posterior shoulder of the axial bore in the casing when the pattern is at or downstream of its reference position.

Please amend the paragraph on page 8, lines 18-29, as follows:

Simultaneously, the pattern 8 is urged into a centered radial position in the casing 6 by an elastic material O-ring 84 inserted radially between the peripheral cylindrical surface of the pattern 8 and the ring 19 mounted in the interior housing 64 of the casing 6. The O-ring 84 constitutes return radial spring means for urging the tap-carrier 17 toward a centered radial position in the casing 6. This improves the capacity of the tap 7 to engage in a preliminary hole in the part to be tapped when starting tapping, even if the preliminary hole is slightly off-centered, and whatever the direction of this off-centering may be.

Please amend the paragraph on page 12, lines 5-28, as follows:

Figure 3 also shows an embodiment of the means allowing limited axial forward movement of the tap 7 toward the outside of the casing 6 from the reference position and against the action of ~~[[the]]~~ advance return spring means. Said means include a distal posterior shoulder 161 in the axial bore 16 in the casing 6, and a distal anterior shoulder 82 of the pattern 8 which faces the distal posterior shoulder 161 in the bore. There is an appropriate axial distance D between the shoulders 161 and 82 when the pattern 8 is in its reference position. An advance return spring 20, for example a compression spring, is engaged around the pattern 8 in the axial bore 16 in the casing 6 between the anterior distal shoulder 82 of the pattern 8 and the posterior distal shoulder 161 of the bore, in order to push the pattern 8 axially back in the retraction direction. Accordingly, if the part to be machined is subjected to a slight movement away from the casing 6 during tapping, the tap 7 held by the tap-carrier and the pattern 8 can move forward slightly to follow the part to be machined by compressing the advance return spring 20. This can occur if tapping begins before the part to be machined is correctly pressed against the part-carrier, or before a part pressing device begins to operate, for example.